

FIRST COLORED ILLUSTRATIONS OF SHELLS IN THE  
UNITED STATES

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Fighting over priority was universally somewhat bitter in the early days of descriptive natural history. Thomas Say (1787-1834), a conchologist and entomologist; Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte (1803-1857) ornithologist; and a few others began to feel that some of their articles, especially those pointing out errors of others, were being rejected for publication in the *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, so they organized to produce a new serial *Contributions of the Maclurian Lyceum to the Arts and Sciences*, which ran from 1827-1829, 1 (1-3): 1-84, 5 pls., 2 col. Stroud (1992: 199) noted that, "This rival organization's founders could not have been unaware of the irony implicit in naming it have Maclure, since this elderly philanthropist was still the president of the Academy and would remain so until his death in 1840." When the Academy moved to new quarters the Lyceum bought its old cases and stove for one hundred dollars.

Jacob Green (1790-1841), a native of Philadelphia was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, B. S. 1806, and had an honorary degree in medicine from Yale 1827. He became Professor at Philadelphia's Jefferson Medical College and remained there from it founding in 1825 until his death. In addition, to having published in the Academy's *Journal* (1835) he contributed two conchological articles in the Lyceum's *Contributions*, each illustrated with colored figures of the new species described: *Unio aesopus* (pl. 3), *Achatina oahuensis* and *A. stewartii* (pl. 4). In spite of its brief life the Lyceum's little coterie appears to have produced the first colored plates of shells in the United States during 1827. The following year Isaac Lea, a prominent member of the Academy, would publish quarto hand colored engravings of Unios in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*. They would number 71 before he turned to lithography.

## Reference

Stroud, Patricia Tyson, 1992. Thomas Say, New World Naturalist. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia.